

ABSTRACT

The problem is to provide a business method and business operation/management apparatus intended to promote merchandise sales through an increase in the customer attraction and enhanced appeal of the gift-forwarding service by allowing the customer to exchange or deposit the value of (receive credit for) the received gift merchandise. The solution includes a means of accepting an order through the Internet for the simple purchase and delivery of merchandise, for the purchase of merchandise as a gift not accompanied by an option to select, or for the purchase and delivery of merchandise as a gift accompanied by an option to select; a means of making an unconditional delivery upon acceptance of an order, either for the simple purchase and delivery of merchandise or for the purchase and delivery of merchandise as a gift not accompanied by an option to select, in which the necessary data is processed to deliver to the recipient the merchandise, as designated by the orderer, without granting the recipient an option to select; a means of informing the recipient of the contents of the gift, upon acceptance of an order for the purchase and delivery of merchandise as a gift accompanied by an option to select, in which the recipient is informed, through the Internet, of the contents of the gift as originally ordered; a means of querying the selection, whereby the intent of the recipient relative to the offer of the gift is queried through the Internet, in the form of giving to the recipient a choice between the "take" and "credit" relative to the gift as originally offered; and a means of responding to and processing a selection, where upon selection of "take" by the recipient, the necessary data is processed to deliver the merchandise designated as a gift by the orderer; or upon selection of "credit" by the recipient, the necessary data is processed to post a credit to the account of the recipient according to the price of the merchandise designated as a gift by the orderer; wherein the credit posted to the account of the recipient may be applied to all or part of the amount of an order, either for the simple purchase and delivery of merchandise or for the purchase and delivery of merchandise as a gift not accompanied by an option to select.